

NEWS

American Junior Red Cross

DECEMBER • 1953





American Junior in Japan

DO YOU KNOW that there are schools in Japan for American boys and girls? These are called American Dependent Schools and are for the children of American parents who are living in Japan.

What is more, practically all of these schools are enrolled in the American Junior Red Cross. The members carry on a lively program, much as they did when they were in schools in the States.

The American children like to plan many things with members of the Japanese Junior Red Cross. They are becoming better ac-

quainted with each other this way and are having good times together.

In the picture above, third graders of the Nagoya American School and their Japanese friends from the Sakae School are shown around a Christmas tree. This was at the party the American children gave for the Japanese. They all had fun playing games together. The most fun of all, so the Japanese children thought, was the time when they were given gifts from the American boys and girls as they sat around the Christmas tree.

Good Times Together

VOLUME 35

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NUMBER 3

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by Leonard Weisgard

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AT HOLIDAY TIME

I will honor Christmas in my heart,
And try to keep it all the year.

—Charles Dickens.

Can you keep Christmas?

A recent correspondence album sent by the Savannah School, Savannah, Mo., to Horsens, Denmark, included this quotation adapted from Henry van Dyke.

"Are you willing to forget what you have done for other people and remember only what people have done for you; to learn to ignore what the world owes you and remember what you owe the world; put your rights and duties in the background and do more than your duty calls for in the foreground; see that your fellow men are just as real as you are; realize that the only good reason for your existence is not what you're going to get out of life but what you give to life; close your book of complaints; bring happiness and joy to a few people?

"If you are willing to do these things for even a day, then you can keep Christmas."

First Christmas

By Clarice Foster Booth

I think that little children came
To see the newborn King,
Bringing with them some small gift—
Perhaps a treasured thing.
They must have knelt about His crib
Not far from Mary's feet
Where they could see the Christ Child's face,
All innocent and sweet.

I think that Mary might have laid
Her arm about them there
As others worshipped and the songs
Of angels filled the air.
Adoring children must have caught
The gladness in her face,
And all the while the wondrous Star
Shone out through endless space.

December Cover

Leonard Weisgard, a favorite author and artist for children, designed the December News cover. His jolly Santas all seem to be shouting "Merry Christmas" as they invite NEWS readers to turn the cover and find the Christmas surprises waiting inside the pages.

LOIS S. JOHNSON, editor.

NEWS



From his earliest days, the little fir tree had been told of the high destiny which might be his, if he were lucky—that of being a Christmas tree.

He had heard, too, the legends of the Little Christ Child; and, hearing these, he somehow had the idea that each year the Christ Child was born again on this earth.

"If only I could be the little Christ Child's Christmas tree!" he thought, and was filled with longing. He determined to grow as straight and tall and beautiful as he could, so he might be worthy of this honor. Year by year he grew, and always with that one ambition in his mind; yet he did not speak of it to anyone, until one year when he was nearly large enough to be chosen.

"Bless my soul!" exclaimed an elderly tree who grew near him. "I hadn't noticed until now how tall you have become! You are almost big enough to be a Christmas tree."

"To tell the truth, that is what I've wanted to be and—more than that—I should like to be the Christ Child's Christmas tree," said the fir honestly. He was not conceited; he was simply stating his lifelong wish.

"You foolish little fir tree! Don't you

By JOSEPHINE S. KERR

Illustrated by
Ann Eshner

know that the Christ Child lived long, long ago, even before the memory of the tallest trees in this forest?" the old neighbor asked.

"You mean—you mean, he isn't born every year?"

"Of course not! Are you born every year? No, you are born, and then you grow, and one day you will die. That is what happened to the Christ Child."

The little fir tree was silent. All his life, then, he had been striving for something that was only a story—of a Child born long ago, who had grown up and long since died. It hardly seemed worth all his efforts; at least, not in comparison with the living Child whom he had hoped to make happy. It was such a blow that he could not think of anything to say. He did not care now whether or not he was tall and straight and beautiful. He did not think he even wanted to be a Christmas tree.

On another day, soon after that, a man and his wife came into the forest, looking for a Christmas tree; but the fir tree paid no attention to them. Since he was no longer interested in his old ambition, he felt that he should turn his attention to other things.

Surely he could find some satisfaction in just being a fir tree. The sky was always changing and wonderful to watch: during the day when it was bright blue, with white

billowy clouds, or gray, or even dark and stormy (in some ways he liked this the best); or, at night, when he held long (one-sided) conversations with the bright stars, which were always so far away.

"Look at this beautiful little tree!" exclaimed the man. "Do you think this is large enough, Mary?"

"Well . . . yes, I really do, since the baby is so small himself," his wife answered, smiling. "It is such a perfect little tree; I almost hate to see it cut."

"We'll try to see that more are planted," said the man. And he came closer to the little fir tree with his axe.

The year before, the fir tree would have been most happy to have been chosen. But now he paid no attention—or tried not to. It was very difficult not to, though, when the axe cut into his side; but he was a brave little tree and bore the shock of the cutting with a stout heart. While the man was carrying him home, he felt light-headed and lost consciousness. When he came to his senses again, the man was saying:

"We're nearly at home now, Mary! Go on in to the baby, and I'll hide the tree in the shed."

"Mary! He called her Mary!" thought the little tree. "That was the name of the Christ Child's Mother, I am sure. And he mentioned the baby. Maybe that old tree near me did not know so much about it as he thought he did."

All through the rest of that day, the little fir tree pondered. He hardly dared to hope, and yet . . . and yet. . . .

At last it was evening, a cold, clear evening with bright stars sparkling everywhere. The fir tree looked up at them, from the doorway of the shed, as he had looked at them on so many nights from his place in the forest. "O Stars," he called silently to them, "look down and tell me what my fate is to be!" But the stars only seemed to mock him with their cold, bright laughter.

Then the man came out, nailed him to a wooden platform and carried him into the house. He was set in front of a window, so that he could look out and see those same

(Continued on next page)

The little fir heard the man say, "We're nearly home, Mary. I'll hide the tree in the shed."



stars. First, his branches were hung with lights: lights of all colors—red, blue, yellow, orange, green.

"How beautiful I shall look!" thought the tree to himself. "This is even better than having the stars themselves to wear!" And he began to take an interest in the decorations.

They were hanging small, odd-shaped ornaments on him now. "See!" the wife was saying. "This is one we had when I was a little girl—this reindeer. That is the fun of ornaments, I think—to keep them from year to year. Why, these bring back all our old Christmases! And think how our child will love them!"

As each ornament was put upon his branches, the tree felt more and more proud. Finally, they hung glittering icicles all over him, and put cotton around the base, to cover the boards, and make it look as if he were standing in snow.

"Have we finished?" asked the man.

"Yes, I think—oh, no! We have forgotten the star at the top!" cried his wife. So they found a star all shiny with tinfoil, and put it at the very top of the tree.

"Now," thought the fir to himself, "this is surely something special, if I am to have a star, too." For he did not know that nearly all Christmas trees have a star at the very top.

Then it was night, and everything in the house slept. Everything, that is, except the little fir tree. He was so excited that he could hardly wait for morning to come, so that he could see whether by any chance the baby in the house was the little Christ Child—whether he had been right in his dreaming all those years.

AT LAST the morning sun began to come in. First it touched the icicles on the tree and the tinfoil star at the tip. They sparkled in the sun as if they were smiling back a greeting, and the fir tree himself called out, "See me, O Sun! Do you recognize me? I am the little fir tree who has talked to you often and often, out in the forest." But the sun only climbed higher and did not answer.

He heard sounds in the other room, and finally the mother came in with a blanket. She spread it on the floor and went out.



It seemed to the little tree that a golden halo shone around the child's fair head.

When she returned, the man was following her, and in her arms she carried a baby. She put him down gently on the blanket, and the baby looked up at the tree. He smiled. Then he held out his arms toward the tree.

It seemed to the little fir that a golden halo shone around the child's fair head, and in that moment his happiness was complete.

"The old tree was wrong, and I was right!" he thought. "The Christ Child is

born anew every year—and this year it is my turn to be His tree and to bring Him joy!"

And really, when you think of it, he was probably right. For every house that shelters a child shelters also the spirit of the Christ. And in each of us, each year, the miracle happens: the Christ Child is born and lives again.

(Reprinted by courteous permission of the author and the publisher, the Horn Book, Inc., Boston, Mass.)

Christmas with the New Zealand Juniors



COURTESY NEW ZEALAND EMBASSY

New Zealand children have fun building sand castles on the beach at Christmas.

FROM the Kaniere School, Hokitika, New Zealand, to JRC members in Greenbush, Wisconsin, came a beautiful correspondence album. Among the stories about this interesting country, which were told in the album, was one about how Christmas is celebrated there.

Christmas comes in midsummer in New Zealand, because the seasons are the reverse of ours. Instead of looking for snow, the New Zealand children enjoy summer sports at Christmas time. Swimming, tennis, and cricket are favorites. At Kaniere School, a big Christmas party is held and everybody

receives a present from the Christmas tree.

School correspondence is only one of the activities the New Zealand Junior Red Cross takes part in. The members study courses in first aid and home nursing. They conduct training centers in vacation time. They are also interested in participating in the international school art and school music programs.

The New Zealand Junior Red Cross was founded in 1920 and today numbers 25,000 members. It publishes "Our Magazine" for the members, which is a lively and interesting publication.

Eight Days

As the Jewish father lights the Menorah candles, the family remembers the old story of Judah Maccabeus and the miracle of the Temple.



THE MONTH of December, which stands for Christmas to so many boys and girls, also marks one of the happiest of all Jewish religious holidays.

Hanukkah, which is celebrated this year on December 2-9, is a particular favorite with Jewish children throughout the world. They love the exciting 8-day celebration, with its wonderful presents, special games and foods, and delicate Menorah candles shining brightly. But they love even more the story of *Hanukkah*—the reason for this happy occasion.

Like many other Jewish holidays, *Hanukkah* celebrates an event that is important to freedom-loving people of all religions

and ancestries. It marks one of the first times in history that men went to war to defend their right to worship God in their own way.

All this took place more than 2 thousand years ago. King Antiochus of Syria had inherited part of the Greek empire of Alexander the Great, and Judea fell under his rule. For hundreds of years the Jews had lived at peace in this land. They were good farmers, fine craftsmen, and deeply religious people who won the respect of many foreign rulers, even though they refused to give up their belief in one God and adopt the pagan idols worshipped by the others.

But Antiochus insisted that the Jews accept the Greek gods. He built a statue

of Joy

Story by
SONYA F. KAUFER

Illustrated by
Harve Stein



of Zeus in the holy Temple in Jerusalem, and those who refused to bow to the statue were killed.

This act of tyranny took the people of Judea by surprise. Some felt that they had better obey Antiochus. But others believed that freedom was more important than life itself, and decided to resist the Syrians at any cost. The leader was Mattathias.

When the Jews saw that they could not regain their liberty peacefully, Mattathias and his five sons set up a secret camp in the hills. Then the great leader sent back word to all the towns and villages of Judea: "Whoever will battle for the Lord, follow

me." Before long, there was an underground army of strong, courageous Jews, determined to win religious freedom.

Under the military command of Judah Maccabeus, one of Mattathias' sons, the band of rebels carried out a constant guerilla war against the soldiers of Antiochus. They struck suddenly, when they were least expected, disappearing before the Syrians could hit back. In this way the Maccabees, as they came to be known, managed to wipe out many Syrian garrisons, even though they were far outnumbered.

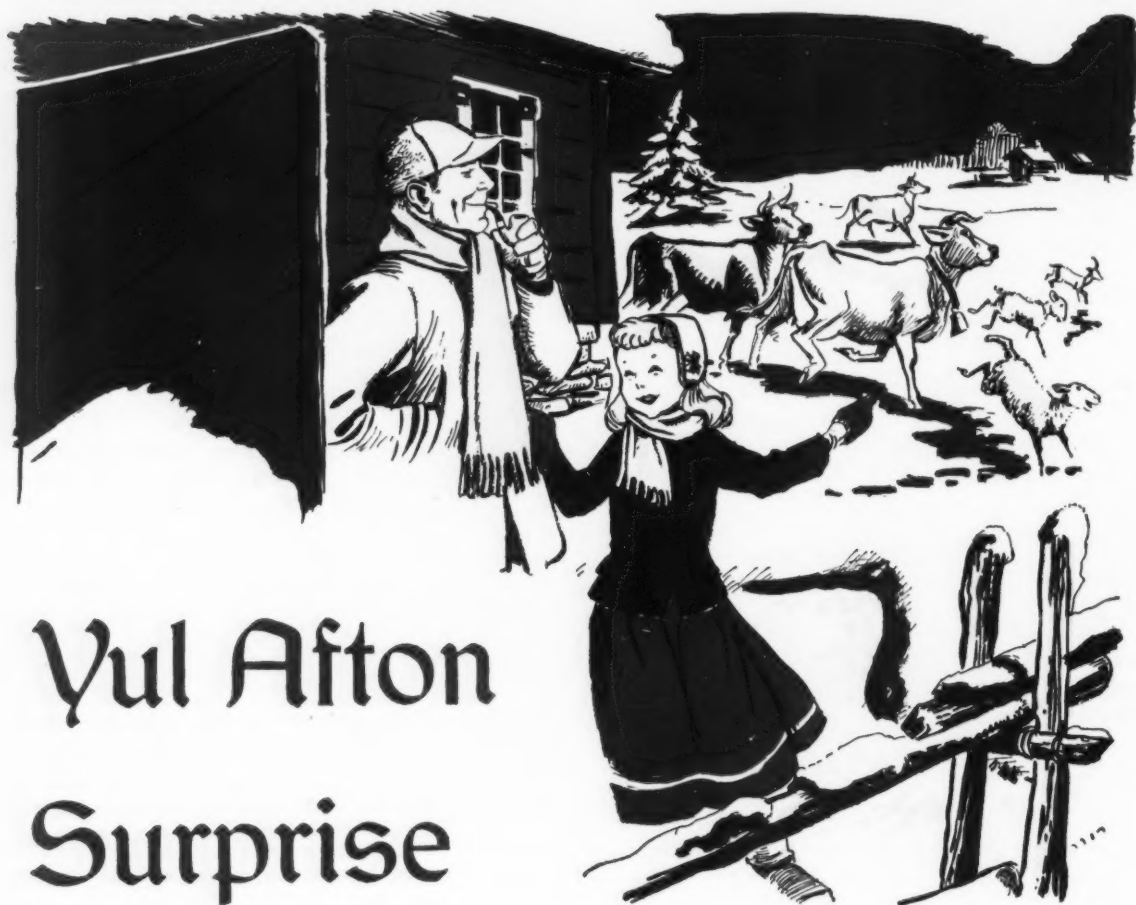
Antiochus kept sending more and more men into Judea, but his soldiers were no match against the skill and courage of the Jews. Finally, after 3 years of battle, he gave up. The Syrians withdrew from the Jewish cities. Then the Maccabees tore down the statues of the Greek gods and rededicated the Temple.

You can imagine the celebration that took place then! The people danced and sang. For the first time in years, they prayed to God without fear. And every year since, for more than 2 thousand years, Jews everywhere have held a similar celebration.

That is why *Hanukkah* is called the Feast of Dedication. But you may also hear it called the Feast of Lights, because lighting the *Hanukkah* candelabra—or Menorah, as it is called—is an important ceremony. This tradition comes from a miracle that is said to have taken place during the first celebration.

After the Temple was rededicated, the priests lit an oil lamp on the altar, which was supposed to be kept burning always. But there was only enough oil in the Temple to last a few hours, and it took many days to prepare more. To everyone's amazement, that little bit of oil remained lit for 8 days until the new supply was ready.

That's why, during *Hanukkah*, Jewish children light the Menorah. As they add one more candle each day, they remember the miracle of the Temple and the historic victory of their ancestors, who were willing to fight for liberty to worship their God.



Yul Afton Surprise

**Frances Carpenter tells how
Christmas joy came to Swedish Karin.
Illustrations by Ursula Koering.**

▲ "Look, Father, how happy the cows are!" Karin said, as they watched the beasts let out of their winter home in the barn.

"EVERYTHING is ready for Christmas Eve, Karin dear," the little Swedish girl's mother said as she looked around the big farmhouse kitchen. Only of course she did not use the words "Christmas Eve." Instead she called this happy time of the year by its Swedish name, *Yul Afton*.

"Don't you think Erik might come after all, Mother?" Karin asked for the tenth time that afternoon.

"No, Karin dear," her mother answered, also for the tenth time. "Your eldest

brother now is a man. Learning to fly airplanes for his country comes before everything, even so important a thing as *Yul Afton* at home. Erik wrote you himself. He did not think he could get enough time off for such a long journey."

"It will not be half so much fun if Erik is not here," Karin said sadly. "Erik always makes the best *Yul Afton* tricks. Erik always leads our dancing. It will be horrid without him."

It had not been so bad during the busy

weeks before *Yul*. While the maids were scrubbing and cleaning, while the new *Yul* clothes were being made, Karin kept thinking, "Somehow Erik will come. Surely he will come home for *Yul Afton*."

But here it was *Yul Afton* itself. And Erik had not come!

"Everyone on this farm is happy but me," Karin told her father as they walked over the snow to visit the animals in the barn. "The wild birds are happy. Look how they are flying around their *Yul* tree!"

The *Yul* tree for the wild birds was a big sheaf of yellow grain, tied on top of a tall pole. Now it was covered with twittering birds, brave little birds which had not flown away south.

In Sweden every living creature must have reason for joy on the birthday of the Christ Child. Bird, dog or cat, cow, horse, goat, or chicken—each animal here would have a good *Yul Afton* feast of its own.

"Look, Father, how happy the cows are!" Karin said as they watched the beasts let out of their winter home in the barn. "They kick up their heels as if they were young calves."

"It is good for everyone to be free on *Yul Afton*, my Karin," her father said. "We must not forget to let Svart off his chain for this evening." Svart was their fierce watchdog, who was tied up every night at his kennel near the back door of the farmhouse.

Karin stayed behind until the cows were brought back into the barn. "You know this is *Yul Afton*, little cows," she said to them. "On this blessed day, they say animals talk. Please tell the *Yul Tomte* to bring Erik home in time for our tree."

As soon as she had spoken, Karin ran quickly out of the barn. She was afraid the cows truly would answer her. And it would be bad luck if she heard them.

Karin was not sure she really believed the fairy tales her grandmother told her about animals speaking on the night before *Yul*. She was not even sure she believed in the *Yul Tomte*, the good Christmas elf.

But it was better not to take chances. It just might be true the *Yul Tomte* had something to do with the extra presents under the *Yul* tree. It just might be the *Yul Tomte* had some Christmas magic of his very own.

So on this *Yul Afton*, as always before, Karin set out a bowl of sweet Christmas pudding for the little old fellow. When she was smaller than now, she used to think she could see the *Tomte* beyond the huge kitchen stove. Being such a tiny, wee man, even his bright red cap and his snowy white beard were hard to catch sight of. But she was sure she had once heard his clumsy shoes, running away when she came near.

On this afternoon, Karin spoke into the shadows when she set down the Christmas pudding for the *Yul Tomte*. "O *Tomte*, dear *Tomte*! Do something quickly! Bring Erik back to us in time for *Yul Afton*."

But the hour for the "bread dipping" came. And Erik was not with his family, gathered in the farmhouse kitchen.

THE GREAT ROOM was bright with gay paper streamers. The floor had been scrubbed white. The dishes in the big open cupboard fairly sparkled. The rows of copper cooking pots shone like gold. And the geraniums on the windowsills were as red as the *Yul* berries in the evergreens all about. Oh, that kitchen was a fine place to be in on this Christmas Eve.

Good smells everywhere made Karin's mouth water. For days the farmhouse had been filled with the spicy odors of the *Yul* cooking. Raisin breads, almond rings, and pepper cakes had been baked. Best of all Karin liked the ginger cookies, especially the giant gingerbread goats.

These cooky goats were in memory of long, long ago times before there were any churches in Sweden. They told of the goat of Thor, the old Norse god of thunder. In those early times it was for Thor that the northern peoples made their winter feast. They called that feast *Yul*. The log they

(Continued on next page)

SURPRISE—*continued*

dragged from the forest to burn and bring them light was the *Yul* log. The winter berries they gathered had the red color which Thor liked the best.

Today it is the birthday of the Christ Child which everyone in Sweden celebrates. But the name of the December feast is still *Yul*.

The smells in the kitchen told Karin of other good things which would be set out out on the *Yul Afton* table. There was *lutfisk*, the good fish pudding. It always was part of her family's feast. Then, from the great oven, came the odor of roasting pig. This would come in whole on its big platter, with a crown of berries around its ears and a red apple in its mouth.

"Now for the bread dipping," Karin's mother called out. "Grandfather shall go first. He is the oldest. And don't forget to make your *Yul* wishes!"

Each one took his turn. Into the great pot of soup on the stove went the tip of his bread. Out it came again, dripping with goodness, ready to be popped into his mouth.

THEN IT WAS TIME to open the door of the livingroom. In her excitement, Karin almost forgot her missing brother. With the other children she squealed with joy at the sight of the *Yul* tree. How splendid it was! Its green branches were dusted with sparkling white. Its gay tinsel was bright in the lights of its hundred wee, burning candles. There was electricity in this Swedish farmhouse, to be sure. But the family still kept to the old custom of lighting their *Yul* tree with tiny homemade white candles.

"There are even more presents than last year," Per, Karin's younger brother, said as they stood side by side before the tree. Piles upon piles of presents were there, each wrapped in gay paper and sealed with sweet smelling wax.

"What can that big, big one be, Per?"

That great box under the bed sheet?" Karin whispered.

"Maybe it's a new workbench for Father," Per guessed.

"Or maybe it's some tiny thing put in a big box for a joke." Karin was thinking of a gift she had last *Yul*. It came in a huge box. When she took off the lid, there was a second box. Inside the second box was a third box. Another box and another! Smaller and smaller ones! Everyone laughed at the last tiny box. And inside it was the small gold locket Karin had wanted so badly.

"Hush, children, we sing now! All ready, Mother." Their father called for quiet.

Karin loved the old carols. She sang almost as loud as her mother. She liked, too, to hear her father read the beautiful story of the Christ Child from the great family Bible. But she could not help looking and looking at the piles of mysterious packages under the *Yul* tree.

Her father's eyes twinkled when, putting the Bible away, he stepped to the tree to give out the presents.

"This biggest one first," he said. "Karin shall pull off the sheet when I have read the verse." Each gift under the tree had a little poem to go with it. And this was the jingle pinned upon the bed sheet:

*"Open this quickly, please!
Inside there lies
A very impatient
Yul Afton surprise."*

Karen's heart beat fast as she pulled off the big sheet. Then her face fell. "Why, it's only the old chest from the hall," she said, disappointed.

"Open it quickly, the verse said," her father reminded her. And she lifted the lid. Then she did squeal with joy. "Erik! Oh, Erik! It's Erik! I knew he would come."

The little girl threw her arms around the waist of the tall, laughing young man who stepped out of the chest. In his air cadet's



Each person in the big sleigh carried a blazing torch to light the way.

uniform, she thought her big brother was more splendid even than the *Yul* tree.

In the noise of his welcome it was hard for Erik to tell how it had happened. How he had been given a ride in an airplane to the home of a friend. How he had borrowed some skis. How fast he had hurried to reach home in time.

The presents seemed even more wonderful now that the family all were there together. Everyone was saying to everyone else, "*Tusen tack! Tusen tack!*" ("A thousand thanks! A thousand thanks!")

When the last gift had been admired, everyone — even Grandmother — danced around the *Yul* tree. Erik led them, his long legs fairly flying. In a line, holding hands, they danced all through the house. Upstairs and downstairs, not a single room was forgotten. Each corner of the farmhouse must have its Christmas blessing.

Then came the *Yul* feast around the great table. Everyone clapped when Erik found the lucky almond in his bowl of *Yul* pudding. Karin ate so much she could hardly get up from her seat. But she did not

forget to curtsy to her mother as she did after each everyday meal. "*Tack vor maten, lilla Mor,*" she said, which means "Thanks for my food, Mother dear!"

Early, early next morning, the whole family set out for the *Yul* service at the church. There were still stars in the dark sky, and each person in the big sleigh carried a blazing torch to light the way.

Other sleighs were gliding over the highway. Karin could see their torches moving over the snowy land. It was a splendid light all the torches gave when they were thrown upon the big bonfire at the church door.

Inside the church, hundreds of candles were burning. And in their light the good people of this Swedish countryside bowed their heads. With their prayers and their carols they gave thanks for the Christ Child.

Karin did not know what the others said in their hearts. But she herself said "*Tusen tack! Tusen tack* for everything, and especially for Erik and our *Yul Afton* surprise."

THE END

Holiday Cheer-Makers

Every Christmas JRC members all over the country are busy like little snowflakes making Christmas surprises for servicemen and veterans in hospitals, for children in hospitals, and other shut-ins. On these pages are pictured some of these holiday cheer-makers hard at work on their Christmas projects.



RED CROSS PHOTO BY RAY PALMER
WE MADE TRAY FAVORS for a veterans hospital (Faxon School, Kansas City and Jackson County Chapter, Kansas City, Mo.)

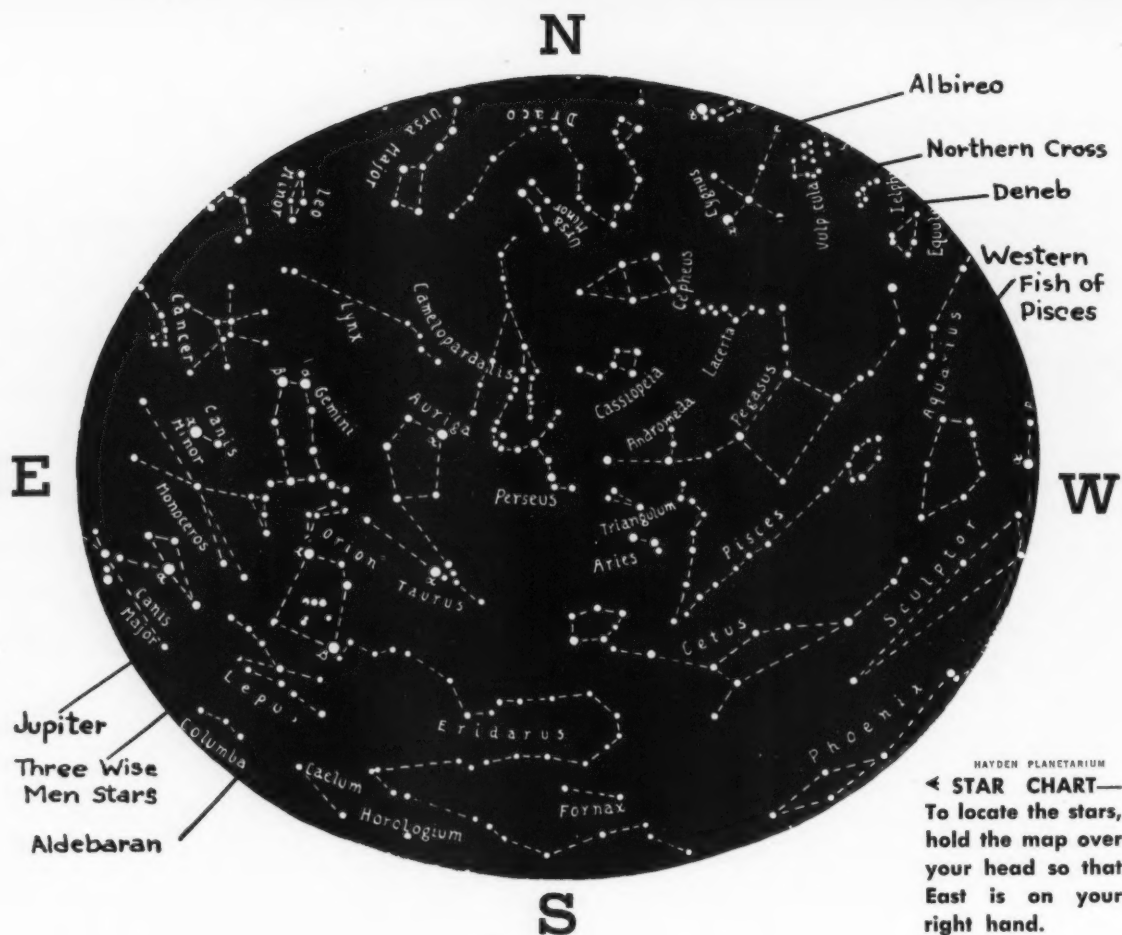


◀ WE KNITTED AFGHANS for the soldiers in the Army hospital. (Summer Avenue School, Newark, N. J.)

WE PAINTED POSTERS for Fort Eustis Hospital. (Virginia State School for the Blind and Handicapped, Hampton Chapter, Va.) ▶



WE FILLED STOCKINGS with pecans for the veterans hospital. (Ouachita Parish Chapter, Monroe, La.)



CHRISTMAS STARS

By CATHARINE E. BARRY

Associate Curator
American Museum of Natural History
Hayden Planetarium

"... and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the Child was.

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy."

Matthew 2:9

★ ★ ★

THE STARS belong to Christmas. At this season of the year there seems to be some magic pervading the heavens, bringing new beauty and a depth of meaning which are missing at other times.

Under a star-studded sky we begin to grasp the real significance of Christmas—the ageless meaning that has survived the

centuries since the Wise Men were guided by the Star of Bethlehem. The reason for this becomes apparent when we consider the true meaning of the sky picture.

As far as individuals are concerned, the stars are eternal. The same ones that shone down on the Child in his manger crib shine down on us tonight.

On the eve of the happy and holy day that all Christianity celebrates, the sky becomes a veritable Christmas tree whose branches stretch north, south, east, and west like sheltering arms, hiding all things that are not beautiful from us. The most exquisite gems of the heavens ornament this sky tree—the same tree which sparkled, perhaps, even more brilliantly on the eve of the first Christmas.

Around 9 o'clock, an hour not too late on this the night of all nights, the planet Jupiter, a neighboring world of ours, will be seen shining like a beacon in the southeastern sky. Jupiter is the giant member of the sun's family. If it were as close to the earth as the moon, it would appear 40 times greater in diameter than the full moon and its light so bright that it would overwhelm even the most brilliant stars.



Jupiter is in the constellation of Taurus, the Bull, which claims the scintillating orange-red star, Aldebaran, as its fiery eye.

Perhaps by this time you will have decided that Jupiter is the Christmas Star. It might rightfully be—but, no one knows. However, as twilight fades into the darkness of night, and the stars like diamonds come out one by one, Jupiter seems to outshine them all with celestial light.

Directly to the east, Orion, the Giant (an outstanding constellation), dominates that area of the sky. The three stars of his belt, known as the Three Wise Men in South American countries, make one mindful of the search almost two thousand years ago for the star which would point the way to the newborn King. This year they seem to point to Jupiter which, as it appears to

move across the sky during the night, in your heart might lead you to the Child in the manger crib.

With a little imagination on the part of the observer, the Milky Way—that cloud-like veil which spans the heavens from one horizon to the other—is like the angel hair used today to decorate our Christmas trees. It is, however, the light from millions and millions of stars so distant that their light comes to us in a diffused manner. Yet they also play a part in this sky picture.

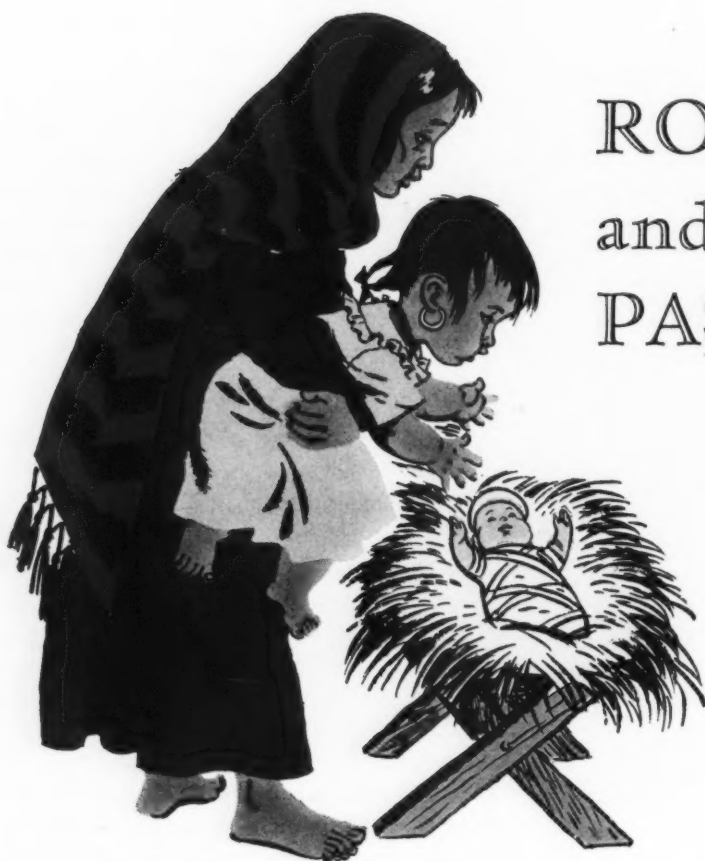


Upright on the western horizon stands the Northern Cross embedded in the Milky Way. This configuration of stars, too, seems to symbolize this season of the year. The white star Deneb is at the top of the Cross. At the foot is one of the most beautiful double stars in the sky. With a good pair of field glasses you can separate the two. Albireo, the star you see with the unaided eye, is a rich golden color like a topaz; its companion is a heavenly blue.

If you follow west of the Cross into the southwest and about halfway up in the sky, you will see a lovely circlet of faint stars representing the western fish of Pisces, which is tied with a ribbon of fainter stars to the tail of the northern fish.

This is the area of the sky which in ancient times was sacred to the Jewish people, the area of the sky in which they were looking for a sign to announce the birth of their King. (Follow the star chart and then see if you can't trace these stars and constellations in the sky.)

Among all the stars that shine on us on this Christmas Eve is the Bethlehem or Christmas Star. There are many legends told about this miracle star and astronomers do not agree on its identity. But of much greater importance than the explanation of the star is its significance for us at Christmas. Through the centuries its light shines around the world, a symbol of illumination in dark places, a guiding beacon for those who hope and have faith in the good heart of man and God.



ROSA and the PASTORALE

Story by
FLORENCE WIGHTMAN ROWLAND

Illustrations by
Beth Krush

▲ Rosa lifted the little girl up high enough so that she could place the figure of the Christ Child in the cradle.

ONE hundred and fifty years ago, in California, the red-tiled roofs of the Santa Ines Mission were covered by a thin coat of winter frost. Ten-year-old Rosa, an Indian girl, would have liked to stay under her warm blankets, but the mission bells had already stopped ringing.

Suddenly Rosa sat up, sleep no longer filling her eyes. Today was Christmas! It was the day when she would see again the exciting Christmas pageant, the *Pastorale*.

She quickly threw off her covers. She must hurry. There was still much to be done to fix up the stage. Besides, the boys had to be helped into their costumes.

After the first meal was over, Rosa smoothed the blankets on the bed mats. As she walked toward the mission, she saw her brother Juan and his friend Antonio standing in the middle of the winding foot-path, talking.

Antonio said, "We have been waiting for you, Rosa." Handing her a small wooden figure that he had just finished whittling, he continued, "Here is the Christ Child that Father Uria asked me to carve. Will you put him in the manger for me? Juan and I must gather some greens to decorate the stage."

Rosa felt the smoothness of the wood. She looked into the tiny face. Antonio had made it look like a real baby. She was sure their *padre*, Father Uria, would be very pleased.

"I'll do it right away," she promised, starting toward the cluster of buildings not far away.

As she passed the hut where Antonio lived with his parents and his 3-year-old sister Carmen, she thought she heard someone crying, perhaps Carmen.

When Rosa peeped in through the door, she saw the little girl lying face down on her blankets.

"Is something wrong?" Rosa asked. "Is there something I can do to help you?"

Carmen sat up, tears still running down her cheeks. "An-An-Antonio—would not give me—the doll—he—made," she sobbed.

Seeing the wooden figure in Rosa's hands, a smile spread quickly across Carmen's face. "Oh, you brought it," she cried joyfully. "You brought it to me."

Rosa did not like to disappoint her. She said gently, "I am carrying the Christ Child to his manger, Carmen. We could have no Christmas play without him. Would you like to put the Holy Babe in his cradle?"

Tears spilled down Carmen's cheeks. "But—I want to put him to sleep here—under my blankets. I want to play with him."

"I have a plan," Rosa began. "I will ask Father Uria to let you have the Christ Child to keep, after the pageant is over. Won't that be nice?"

This seemed to please Carmen. Rubbing her eyes across her sleeve, she went willingly with Rosa. They walked past the patio and up the four steps to the high platform that was the stage.

"There's the manger, Rosa," Carmen said, pointing to a small basket in one corner.

Handing Carmen the piece of cloth she found inside the cradle, Rosa watched as the child wrapped it around the little figure. Then she lifted her up high enough so that she could place the Christ Child inside.

Later on, in the sewing room, Rosa was helping Juan to get into his costume. He looked so different in the flowing robes. Juan was the wisest of the Wise Men. It

Who Is It?

WHO IS IT that comes each year
With eight happy reindeer?
Who gives a merry cheer to all
And brings a train and a doll?

Who comes down the chimney
And stands by a colorful tree,
While on the roof his reindeers paw?
Who is it? It's Santa Claus!

CAROL MUELLER
Fremont School
Alhambra, Calif.

was he who had the only speaking part in this Christmas pantomime.

"Unless you stand still I'll prick you with my needle," Rosa cautioned.

Her friend Lora was having the same trouble with Mateo. He was one of the older boys who lived in the building for unmarried young men. He was the Satan of the Pastorale, and as Lora straightened the mask over his merry eyes he looked cruel and mean—like the real Satan.

"Unless you hold still a moment," she said, "I cannot fix this tight enough. You don't want it to come off right in the middle of the pageant, do you?"

Mateo reached over to pull one of her pigtails. "What an old woman you are getting to be," he teased.

"Ouch!" Lora said. "If you are not ready in time, Father Uria will scold me."

Rosa was now helping Pablo, who was one of the eight angels. As she tied the last knot, she thought how very much like an angel he looked in his long white robes and his big shiny wings.

Looking up, Rosa was surprised to see their *padre* standing in the doorway. He motioned to her; she hurried to his side.

"Rosa, my child," he said, "I just asked Antonio about the figure he carved for me. He tells me it is finished, that you were asked to put it in the manger on the stage. But it is gone."

"Gone!" Rosa could not believe it. "But, Father Uria," she explained quickly, "I put the Christ Child in his cradle, just after the first meal."

Unless the Holy Babe was found, the Pastoral could not take place. What a disappointment it would be for all of them!

She listened to Father Uria as he spoke to the boys and girls. "All those not in costumes will please hurry to the stage and look around for the little carved figure that Antonio made."

But Rosa did not go with the others. Ever since she found out that the Christ Child was missing, she wondered if Carmen could have taken it.

Rosa ran to Carmen's home. At the door of the hut she called, "Carmen! Carmen!" but there was no answer. There was no one inside.

Rosa stood a moment, wondering where else she should look for the little girl. She remembered seeing Carmen several times down near the river. She liked to play under an old pepper tree, where a smooth, flat stone served as a table. Here the little girl played with acorns and pine cones, humming happily to herself.

Perhaps Carmen had gone there. Oh, how Rosa wished she would find her and the carved figure. Then the Pastoral could begin. Everything was ready.

As she ran toward the river, Rosa called, "Carmen, where are you?"

This time a voice answered, "I'm here, playing."

In a few minutes Rosa was beside her. There on top of the stone lay the Christ Child still wrapped in the piece of cloth.

Rosa did not scold her. Carmen was too young to know she should not have taken it away. Instead, Rosa said quietly, "Come with me. The Pastoral is going to begin soon. We must put the Christ Child in his manger."

Father Uria smiled as she returned the figure. "Now we can begin," he said. "Thank you, my child."

Rosa led Carmen to the place where the audience was waiting for the curtains to be pulled aside.

As the Pastoral began, Rosa sat quietly, enjoying every minute. The young Indian



"The play cannot begin till the carved figure is found," cried Father Uria. "It is gone!"

boys in the orchestra played the violins and lutes beautifully.

When the birth of the Savior was announced, Rosa sat up straighter. Juan was saying in a low voice, "A child is born . . . a Savior. . . ."

Each word came clearly. Rosa was so proud of him.

As the pageant came to an end, Rosa looked once more at the manger, glad that she had found the Christ Child. Glad that the Pastoral could be enjoyed by them all.

On the way home Rosa said to Lora, "I'm truly sorry it is over. I like the Pastoral better than anything else on Christmas Day."

Lora asked, "Better than the eating? And the games and dancing?"

"Yes, better than anything else," Rosa answered quickly. "It would not feel like Christmas to me without the Pastoral."

Puzzle for the Holidays

By GEORGIA ADAMS

Try trimming the tree from the list of words below before turning to page 22 for the answers.

ACROSS

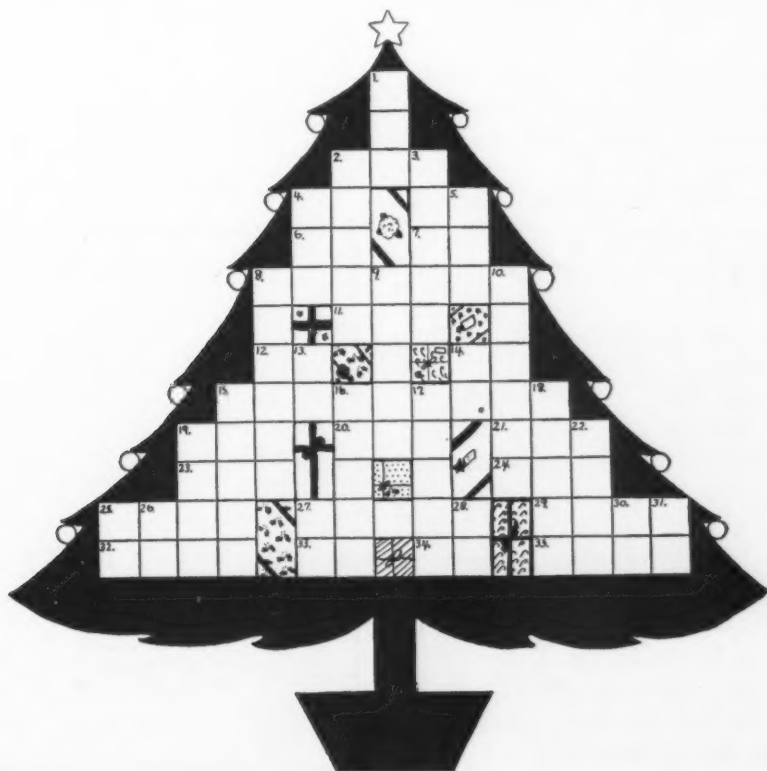
2. Scrooge said this about Christmas
4. Mister (abbr.)
5. first and fourth vowels
6. first and second vowels
7. Puerto Rico (abbr.)
8. We will have done this to the presents before Christmas
11. not wet
12. in like manner
14. article
15. holiday in December
19. form of **to be**
20. moisture found on plants
21. plaything
23. past tense of **to be**

24. period of time
25. to become liquid
27. was not
29. small branch of a tree
32. there are seven in a week
33. versus (abbr.)
34. second and fourth vowels
35. what we like to have at Christmas

DOWN

1. girl's name
2. food made from flour
3. blissful
4. disfigure
5. metal-bearing mineral
8. desires

9. not verse
10. contribute
13. conjunction
14. form of **to be**
15. gulleets
16. mental impressions
17. strong cord
18. kinds
19. in another direction
22. what we do when we are sleepy
25. twenty-sixth president (initials)
26. exclamation
27. West Virginia (abbr.)
28. toward
30. third and fourth vowels
31. first president (initials)





NORTHWESTERN PHOTO

▲ Everybody, including Santa, had a gay time at the Christmas Eve party put on by JRC members of Oshkosh, Wis., for a children's home.

Santa Comes—

ON HIS BUSIEST night of the year, Santa Claus found time to visit the children at the Elizabeth Batchelder Davis Children's Home in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Junior Red Cross members in Oshkosh had invited him to the Christmas Eve party and puppet show they were planning for the boys and girls there.

First there was carol singing. Then boys from Merrill Junior High School put on a merry presentation of Dickens' "Christmas Carol," played by their puppets on a stage built for the occasion. The boys left the stage for the children to use in future puppet shows.

Then, as a part of the fun, gaily decorated bags of Christmas goodies and gifts, filled by JRC members, were distributed by Santa to all the children in the Home.

Santa made many appearances at holiday parties throughout the city under the sponsorship of Junior Red Cross.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE ON PAGE 21

ACROSS

- 2 Bah
- 4 Mr.
- 6 Ae
- 7 P.R.
- 8 Wrapped
- 11 Dry
- 12 So
- 14 An
- 15 Christmas
- 19 Are
- 20 Dew
- 21 Toy
- 23 Was
- 24 Era

- 25 Thaw
- 27 Wasn't
- 29 Twig
- 32 Days
- 33 Vs
- 34 Eo
- 35 Snow

DOWN

- 1 Eva
- 2 Bread
- 3 Happy
- 4 Mar
- 5 Ore
- 8 Wishes
- 9 Prose

- 10 Donate
- 13 Or
- 14 Am
- 15 Craws
- 16 Ideas
- 17 Twine
- 18 Sorts
- 19 Away
- 22 Yawn
- 25 T.D.
- 26 Ha
- 27 W.V.
- 28 To
- 30 lo
- 31 G.W.

We made a MITTEN TREE

A QUEER SIGHT appeared in the main hall of Brehms Lane School No. 231 just before Christmas. Instead of lights on our Christmas tree there, we had hung mittens!

Junior Red Cross members in each class brought the mittens. Some members made mittens. Other boys and girls brought mittens from home. Soon there were 110 pairs, quite enough to decorate our tree. The Junior Red Cross council did the trimming. When the tree was all decorated, we thought it looked very gay with all its brightly colored mittens hanging from its branches.

When the mittens were taken off the tree, they served another purpose. They were then sent to the children at the Rosewood State Training School for their Christmas.

We think our Christmas Mitten Tree was lots of fun.

**GRACE HELEN FINK
NANCY RUTH BRUHN**

**Brehms Lane School
Baltimore, Md.**

We trim our tree with mittens we brought as gifts for a children's home (Brehms Lane School, Baltimore, Md.)





The Littlest Elf's Surprise

Story by
RUTH EVERDING LIBBEY

Illustrated by
Kurt Wiese

ALL THE ELVES were working on musical surprises for Santa Claus.

That is, all but Tiny, the littlest elf. He wished that he could surprise Santa too.

"No, you can't help us tootle our new calliope," said the Biggest Elves. "You are too little. But you may listen to us sing our song."

The Biggest Elves sang loudly—

"Tootle-tee-tee, tootle-tee-toot!

Santa has on his red Christmas suit.

Tootle-tee-tee, tootle-tee-toot!

*We Biggest Elves . . . clap! CLAP!
and salute!"*

After Tiny, the littlest elf, heard their loud, LOUD song and the LOUD, LOUD

calliope play, he went on down the road.

The Next-Biggest Elves were getting ready to ring the tower-bells they had made.

"No, Tiny, you are too little to help pull the ropes," they said. "But we'll sing our song for you "

Their song was very LOUD, too.

"Boom-bum! boom-bum!

Wel-come! wel-come!

Boom-bum! boom-bum!

Wel-come! wel-come!"

The bells and singing hurt Tiny's ears so he walked on down the road. Pretty soon he saw the Next-Next-Biggest Elves. They were dusting off the horses on the merry-go-round they had built.



"No, Tiny, you are too little to help us," they said. "You would fall off from a merry-go-round horse and you can't reach the piano keys on our merry-go-round piano. But you may listen to our song."

"Ping-ity-pang!

Ping-ity-pound!

Santa will ride

Our merry-go-round,"

yelled the Next-Next-Biggest Elves, as they whirled round and round on the horses that pranced up and down.

Tiny, the littlest elf, watched until he was dizzy. Then he walked down the road and sat down under a little fir tree.

Tiny was hungry, so he took a sandwich

out of his pocket. He unwrapped the wax paper and began to eat the sandwich which was spread with nuts and cheese.

While Tiny was eating he kept thinking. . . . "Oh, if I could only have a musical surprise for Santa Claus." Just then a bird began to sing in the top of the little fir tree.

The bird's cheery song sounded as if he were singing . . .

"When you go home

Blow on your comb!

When you go home

Blow on your comb!"

"I don't see how blowing on a comb could make music," Tiny muttered to himself.

"But I guess it won't hurt to try it out."

Tiny crumbled up the rest of his sandwich and scattered the crumbs under the tree for the cheery bird. He folded the piece of wax paper and put it in his pocket. Then he hurried home as fast as he could.

When Tiny got home he looked in his bureau drawer and found a new green comb. He blew and he blew on the comb, but he couldn't make any music. As he put his hand in his pocket he felt the piece of wax paper. Then he had an idea. He folded the wax paper over the green comb and he again blew up and down the covered comb.

"Why I am making music," he laughed. "The cheery bird knew what he was singing about. Now I am going to have a surprise for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve too."

Santa Claus was surprised when the Biggest Elves tootled their calliope and sang their tootly song.

He had another surprise when the Next-Biggest Elves rang the tower bells and sang their Boom-Bum song. But he was sorry he had forgotten to wear his red earmuffs because the bells made so much noise.

Santa was surprised again when the Next-Next-Biggest Elves ping-ity panged their merry-go-round piano. He rode on a white merry-go-round horse until he got dizzy.

"Stop! Whoa!" he cried. "Merry-go-round horses never get anywhere. I must

be off with my reindeer to deliver gifts. It is getting late!"

As Santa climbed into his red sleigh he shouted to all the elves, "Say, where is Tiny, the littlest elf?"

The elves shook their heads sideways, because they didn't know where he was.

When Santa Claus peeked down the first chimney of the first house that he came to he heard the sweetest and strangest music. "I wonder where such sweet music is coming from?" Santa asked as he scrambled down the chimney and plunked his fat gift sack down by the Christmas tree.

"I'm making it," smiled Tiny, the littlest elf, as he stepped out from under the tree.

"But how?" inquired Santa. "I've never heard this kind of music before."

"I play it on my green comb which is covered with a piece of wax paper," laughed Tiny.

"Why, you have the very nicest surprise of all," said Santa. "It is so easy to do that children everywhere—

*Can blow a tune . . .
Like rippling leaves
And singing birds . . .
On Christmas Eves."*

Tiny, the littlest elf, was the happiest elf in the whole world . . . because Santa Claus liked his surprise so very, VERY much!

The little bird
seemed to be sing-
ing a special mes-
sage to Tiny.





Jolly Junior says—

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS TO JRC MEMBERS EVERYWHERE FROM THE EDITOR AND STAFF OF YOUR VERY OWN MAGAZINE—THE "NEWS."

Christmas Safety

See how many blanks you can fill with the correct words. Then see how many safety hints you can put into practice this Christmas.

1. Choose a fresh, green _____.
2. Keep your tree fresh by setting the trunk in a bucket of _____ or wet _____.
3. Place your tree away from a radiator or a _____.
4. Use only fireproof _____.
5. Disconnect _____, when the family is away.
6. Keep your cat or _____ away from the tree.
7. When needles begin to fall, give your _____ to the trash collector or ask your father to _____ it.

Gifts for the Birds

*The cedar tree beside our gate
Is very small and wee,
But just the right size to make
A dandy Christmas tree.
This year I'll trim it for the birds,
On Christmas Eve I'll do it,
I'll tie on little popcorn balls,
Nuts, and bits of suet.
The chickadees will come and eat,
Perhaps a wren or two,
When I wish them "Merry Christmas"
They'll chirp right back "Thank you."*

—Ollie James Robertson.

Party to remember

WHEN pupils of a 3-room rural school in Hinton, West Virginia (Summers County Chapter), heard about a shut-in child living in a little cabin far up the mountainside, they decided to give him a Christmas to remember.

Their first project was to "pound" (fill) a basket with presents and goodies. Then they cut and decorated a small tree. As they drove to the cabin (with horse and wagon borrowed from a farmer) they sang carols. Neighbors of the shut-in, hearing the songs, came and joined in the party.

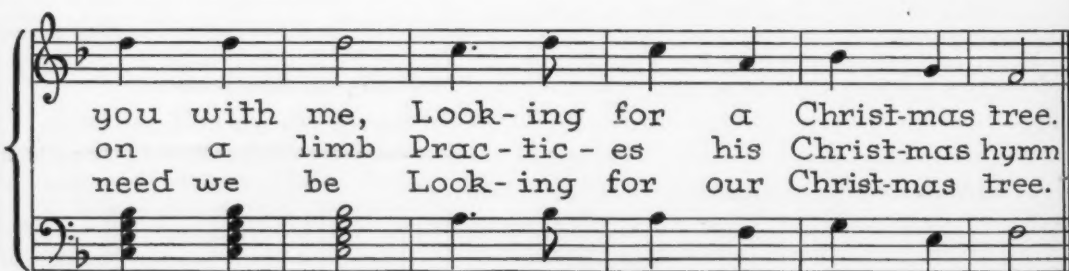
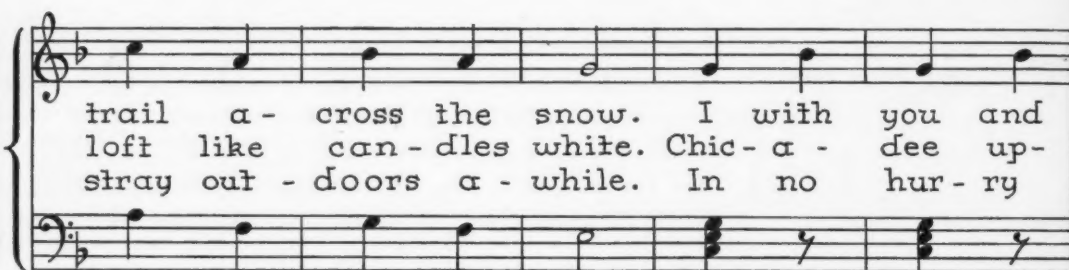
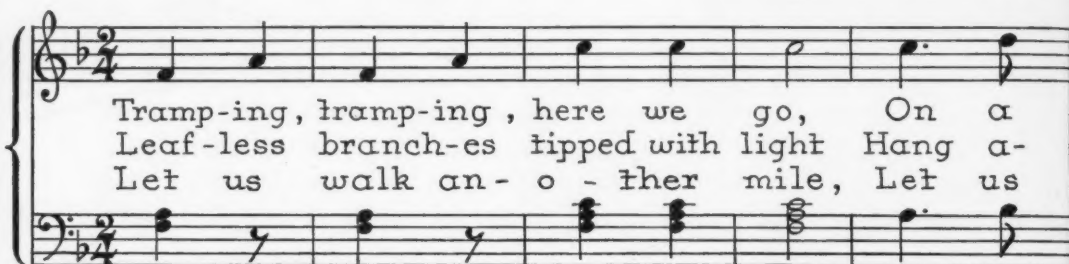
Cheer for veterans

DURING Christmas week members of the JRC Chapterwide Council (Hinds County, Jackson, Miss.) worked hard to bring cheer to families of servicemen and veterans through Red Cross Home Service. Council members brought 75 presents, festively wrapped, and decorated a tree with ornaments made by Edwards School, for a party at the chapter house.

LOOKING FOR A CHRISTMAS TREE

May Justus

Zilphia Horton



Illustrated by Jo Fisher Irwin





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XI